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ABSTRACT

The Teacher Education Center Act of 1973 in Florida mandates that the responsibility for operating programs of preservice and inservice education be shared jointly by the colleges and universities, the school districts, and the teaching profession. To improve the quality of individual inservice components of the plan, the legislature mandated increased consultant-teacher contact time for most inservice components. The non-credit, inservice activities offered through teacher education centers are identified and matched with university resources by contracts. The human resources of institutions of higher education are utilized to deliver staff improvement activities to meet district needs. A brief description is given of three models for the delivery of staff development that have served to effect growth in teacher competencies and the academic achievement of students. In one, full-time faculty are employed to fulfill identified staff development needs in two county school systems. Hired as a result of assessment of the school system's needs, these faculty members provide full-time consultant services and technical assistance in a variety of district program areas. Another model is designed to meet identified staff development needs by means of individualized, clinical-based staff development. The third model provides topic-specific workshops and conferences to help education personnel on a short-term basis. (JD)

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LINKING SCHOOL AND UNIVERSITY STAFF DEVELOPMENT:

A PARTNERSHIP FOR EDUCATIONAL IMPROVEMENT

BY

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LINKING SCHOOL AND UNIVERSITY STAFF DEVELOPMENT:

A PARTNERSHIP FOR EDUCATIONAL IMPROVEMENT

BACKGROUND

The Teacher Education Center Act of 1973 provided Florida with a statewide system of centers, intended to bring about reform in teacher education programs. The Act mandates that the responsibility for operating programs of preservice and inservice education be shared jointly by the colleges and universities, the school districts, and the teaching profession. At present, there are 46 centers, six of which are multi-district centers representing 27 school districts, and 40 single district centers. All nine state universities, as well as seven private institutions, participate in the centers as collaborating partners. Teachers in each of Florida's 67 school districts have access to the program of a Teacher Education Center (TEC). In addition to teaching personnel who are served by TEC, many districts utilize the center to provide inservice education for administrative and noninstructional personnel. A more detailed description of Florida's Teacher Education Centers is available upon request.

Each year the Florida Legislature appropriates two and a half million dollars for public school teacher education centers to contract services with Florida institutions of higher education. These funds are allocated consistent with the policy established in 1978-79 when a formula entitlement method was implemented. The formula distributes available resources in proportion to the unweighted full-time equivalent (FTE) student enrollment in each school district. The entitlement procedure is considered consistent, simple and equitable since the number of unweighted FTE students is related to the number of teachers to be

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served. Additionally, school districts receive funding through the Florida Education Finance Program for staff development based upon a similar principle.

Every five years school districts are required to submit a county master inservice plan for the staff inservice development of education personnel. To improve the quality of the individual inservice components of the plan, the Legislature mandated increased consultant-teacher contact time for most inservice components. Also inservice education must include pre and post tests documenting improved competency. The non-credit, inservice activities offered through teacher education centers are identified and matched with university resources by contracts. The human resources of institutions of high education are utilized to deliver staff development activities to meet district needs.

DUVAL COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM

Jacksonville's public schools have received national recognition for the academic achievement of students and an enthusiasm for excellence in education. After becoming the nation's largest fully accredited school system in 1979, the Duval County Public School District has continued to stress academic excellence with special emphasis on academic competition, character building, respect, patriotism, and courtesy, and a focus on helping students "learn to learn."

Unprecedented parental involvement and community support have combined with the dedicated efforts of classroom teachers to bring about the dramatic improvement that prompted the prestigious Danforth Foundation to identify the school district as an outstanding example of urban education.

Studies have shown that the quality of education in Jacksonville is a major asset of the community. That same combination of involvement, support, and dedication by parents and teachers continues to create improved educational

opportunities for students and a higher quality of life for the citizens of Jacksonville.

THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH FLORIDA, COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN SERVICES AND TEACHER EDUCATION CENTERS

The University of North Florida is the newest university in the State University System of Florida. Located in Jacksonville, on a 1,000 acre wooded campus, the University opened in 1972, offering undergraduate and graduate level programs. It has grown to serve more than 7,500 students enrolled in degree programs. The University is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. The National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) and the Florida Department of Education has accorded program approval to all undergraduate and graduate teacher education programs of the College of Education and Human Services.

The College of Education and Human Services is one of the five colleges which comprise the major teaching, research, and public service units of the University. The College has programs in educational leadership, elementary education, secondary education, art, music,physical education, special education, vocational and technical education, counselor education, and technology education.

The faculty of the College believes that a well developed program of competency-based and clinical-based education provides its students with unusual opportunities for individualization. The College is one the nations' leaders in the development and implementation of educational programs based on specified performance standards.

During a typical school year, the University has teacher education center service agreements with a multi-district center, the Northeast Florida Educational Consortium (NEFEC) representing nine school districts (Baker, Bradford, Dixie, Flagler, Gilchrist, Levy, Nassau, Putnam and Union), and service agreements with eleven single district centers (Alachua, Brevard, Clay, Columbia, Dade, Duval, Hernando, Marion, St. Johns, Volusia, and Wakulla). An allocation is distributed to the University based upon written service agreements between UNF and the teacher education centers serving the public school districts.

A Human Resources Directory, developed by UNF's Teacher Education Center serves as a catalogue of available services. A copy is available upon request.

COLLABORATION

Three models for the delivery of staff development have served to affect growth in teacher competencies and the academic achievement of students. A brief description of each model follows. Additional information is available upon request.

UNIVERSITY STAFF DEVELOPMENT SPECIALIST

Full-time faculty are employed to fulfill identified staff development needs in the Teacher Education Centers serving Duval and the NEFEC county school systems. These faculty members were hired as a result of assessments of the school systems' needs. Their mission is to provide full-time consultant services and technical assistance in a variety of district program areas.

Although initially hired as staff development specialists in a particular subject area, the Teacher Education Center consultant positions have expanded steadily to encompass many functions and responsibilities. The changing nature

of schools and students, and frequent legislative mandates, due to state and national concerns for education improvement, all necessitate the changes in their job descriptions. Therefore, the current level of involvement within the school districts reflects the increasing need for on-going professional development activities of both administrative and teaching personnel.

Added responsibilities have been in the areas of the Florida Beginning Teacher Program, the Florida Performance Measurement System, training responsibility for the Teacher Assistance Program, and training for teachers with unsatisfactory evaluations. Instructional support is provided, including one-to-one assistance in planning, management, and organization to teachers as needed. The consultants also take an active role in the development and revision of curriculum, and the planning and implementation of district-wide, and school-based, inservice activities. Due to the limited administrative personnel in the consortium counties, the TEC consultant has an "interpretive" role between the districts and the Florida Department of Education. Finally, the Duval consultants conduct exit interviews for personnel leaving the system as an outgrowth of the Professional Development Office's attachment to the Personnel Division.

Careful evaluation has shown the consultants to be successful and effective in the many services they provide. A more detailed description of the tasks performed by the TEC consultants is available for review.

INDIVIDUALIZED, CLINICAL-BASED STAFF DEVELOPMENT

To meet identified staff development needs, two models for individualized, site-specific inservice were designed. Using the first plan, staff development was jointly planned for teachers and administrators at selected schools in several curricula areas, including art and music education, consumer education,

and mathematics and science education. Published, research-based curriculum materials were selected and used to guide the development of teacher competencies.

A major factor contributing to the success of this staff development model was its design to meet the needs of a specific school in a specific county school curriculum, for an individual group of teachers and administrators with unique problems. The effectiveness of the model is reported in the publication Inservice Through Modeling. A copy is available upon request.

A second staff development model is known as the school-based, inservice program. The Brooker Elementary School in Bradford County, Florida, provided the setting for the research and development on this model. A description of its goals, strategies and the evaluative component is available upon request.

TOPIC SPECIFIC WORKSHOPS AND CONFERENCES

Staff development continues to be provided to education personnel on a short-term basis. Through one-day workshops, teachers and school personnel are introduced to new strategies and techniques and provided with technical assistance to help solve problems. Examples of high demand requests for this method of delivery include workshops in class management, utilization of science lab equipment, test construction, school law, parent-teacher conferences, and mathematics and computer education.

During the typical school year, several major regional conferences are held. Nationally recognized speakers present keynote addresses. These conferences include individual two to three hour workshops. As education personnel are introduced to new ideas, longer term inservice results. Examples of programs exemplifying the day's staff development activities are available upon request.

STAFF DEVELOPMENT EVALUATION

Each county TEC director is responsible for receiving evaluation information on TEC staff development provided by the University faculty. The University receives regular evaluative feedback from TEC directors at quarterly meetings held throughout the year. In addition, faculty members regularly report on the attainment of their workshop objectives through procedures established by the University. Data received through informal and formal means supports the success of the Teacher Education Center service.

FUTURE COLLABORATION FOR EDUCATIONAL IMPROVEMENT

THE FLORIDA INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

The Florida Institute of Education is a Type I systemwide institute established by the Florida Board of Regents and administratively assigned to the University of North Florida. The Institute is charged with planning and developing collaborative programs and activities among Florida's universities, community colleges, and public schools. Such thrusts are to enhance the possibilities of Florida reaching its overall educational goals and of each of the school districts meeting their goals.

The annual reports present concise statements of the Institute's activities and identify directions for future collaborative programs. Copies are available upon request.

THE CLINICAL CLUSTER MODEL

The Division of Curriculum and Instruction at the University of North Florida has conducted pilot projects, in cooperation with the Duval County Public School District, to determine whether or not increased collaboration between university

and public school personnel would result in a more meaningful experience for undergraduate interns. The clinical cluster model was chosen as the most appropriate design for enhancing opportunities for professional growth for both interns, site faculty, and for providing collaborative instruction for teachers at the site schools. Evaluative feedback indicates that both interns and school personnel benefited from the experience. According to college supervisors, interns showed themselves to be more autonomous and flexible in implementing instructional strategies and management techniques than interns placed in more traditional settings. In some instances, behaviors initiated by interns were subsequently adopted by cooperating teachers.

SUGGESTED IMPROVEMENTS FOR TEACHER EDUCATION CENTERS

Several improvements to the Teacher Education Center Act were suggested by the University. They are summarized as follows:

SCOPE

With appropriate funding, UNF strongly favors broadening the scope of Teacher Education Center activities to include technical assistance, collaborative program development, collaborative research, needs assessment, with greater emphasis on collaborative pre-service programs. We see this broadened scope as a further opportunity for colleges of education and public schools to improve the quality of education at all levels.

COLLABORATION

UNF strongly supports the report of the BOR Task Force on Public School Outreach and Service which stated as Issue 1: "There is a need for planned collaboration which formalizes public school--SUS partnerships." The TEC law

and/or rules can establish advisory councils whose members include highest level policy-makers who can ensure planned collaboration. Such councils would provide for the review of programs and regularly report on their effectiveness and accomplishments.

The University of North Florida also strongly supports modification of the law to provide for the placement of university teacher education personnel in public school settings within their assigned service areas. Funding to support this change is essential, of course.

Finally, UNF believes the law should be strengthened to promote collaboration at the "operating program" levels between colleges/universities and district school boards for both pre-service and inservice teacher education. With primary responsibility vested in one group for pre-service and another group for inservice, the tendency is to think of programs as "their" and "our" programs. Collaboration, in the true sense of mutually planning, tends to become "consultation" wherein advice/suggestions may or may not be sought; may or may not be acted on.

GOVERNANCE

The governance system should link local TECs with their regional college and university faculties. The present law specifies only that classroom teachers "shall constitute a majority" or a center council. It is therefore optional whether or not colleges/universities are represented; and, in practice, their representation is minimal and largely advisory. If mutually supportive relationships are to evolve to augment both college and university teacher education programs and school district inservice teacher education programs, some provision should be made. We suggest the development of a regional council to provide for periodic review of teacher education center activities. Membership

of the regional council would include the district schools superintendent(s), the dean(s) and/or director(s) of college/university teacher education programs, representative program administrators in both college/universities and public schools.

EVALUATION

The evaluation provision of the current law can be strengthened to require, as a part of the annual report, copies of the needs assessments and a description of the extent to which TEC programs are related to identified needs.

On a more global level, evaluation should provide for dissemination of exemplary practices as defined by the BOR Task Force on Public Schools Outreach and Service. Evaluation of a TEC should be made in the light of new knowledge and validated practices. Changes in evaluation processes should be made so that university resources and expertise are fully utilized.

The evaluation design should be developed collaboratively between public school and university personnel. The implementation of the design should be vested in research experts from the school district(s) and university, reporting findings to local and regional councils as well as affected personnel. Funding should be provided by the state, based on local design proposals.

FUNDING

Teacher Education Center funding should surely be continued. The funding levels should be increased to recognize new costs in salaries, support resources, and travel.

The FTE basis for allocation of funds has merit which appears to exceed alternative methods. If "assessed needs" were used, the problems become: evaluation of the validity of the needs assessment. Who determines the merit

of proposals for funds? How would a dollar value be fixed in relation to the magnitude of an identified "need"?

We do not have any objections to the Teacher Education Center program serving non-instructional personnel. Our College of Business Administration and College of Computer and Information Sciences are two academic units which could contribute technical services to school systems.